

To the Right Honourable the LORDS in Parliament Assembled.

The humble Petition of divers Persons, on the behalf of themselves, who have suffered, and of others whose Relations do now suffer miserable Bondage and cruel Slavery under the Turks.

Sheweth,

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That in the 17th. Yeare of his late Majesties Reigne, it was declared by the Parliament, that many thousands of his Majesties good and loving Subjects, with their Ships and Goods, had of late been surprized and taken at Sea, as they were in their lawful Trading, by Turkish, Moorish, and other Pyrates; and some of them to free themselves of the cruel and barbarous usage of those Pyrates, had renounced the Christian Religion, and turn'd Turks: And others kept in Bondage were used with so extream cruelty, that they were in great danger thereby to lose their lives, unless they should also forsake the Christian Religion: and divers of those his Subjects kept in Bondage, being expert and skilful Marriners, were usually employed at Sea against other his good Subjects, and proved very prejudicial to them, and hurtful to the Trade and Merchandizing of his Majesties Dominions: for which and other Reasons, an Act passed for *raising a Duty for Redemption of Captives*.

That in the year 1650 the Parliament finding that the moneys formerly Collected upon the said Duty was not sufficient to perfect that good work for the Redemption of Captives, passed another Act, and several Acts hath since passed, which (with some intermission) continued until 1656. and by an Act in that year a *Duty of one half part of one per Cent.* was raised, and to be Collected with the Customs, for *Redemption of Captives*, and to continue until the twenty fourth of June, 1660. And although many Captives were redeemed thereby, yet since the said Act in 1656. (by several Orders of State) there hath been taken out of the said Duty above 40000. pounds, and employed for other uses then by the words of that Act is expressed, (besides other great sums taken away, which was raised by former Acts.)

That all the said moneys hath not onely been unduly taken and disposed of as aforesaid, but since the eleventh of October last, the duty (through whose default your Petitioners know not) hath not been Collected, whereby your Petitioners are left remediless, and without any hopes of succour, unless your honours commiserate their sad Cases and Conditions, and apply some apt remedies thereunto, the Commissioners for preservation of the Customs (in whose power the disposal of the said moneys hath long been, and before whom the most of your Petitioners Cases remain) having no moneys in their hands to relieve them.

That there are now above an hundred persons Captives in *Argeir*, who undergo extream cruelties and most barbarous usage, (as we are informed by divers Persons and Letters from thence) and cannot be redeemed for want of the moneys which were and should be raised upon the said Duty.

That some of your Petitioners and others have been redeemed out of Captivity by English Merchants upon promises and obligations to them given for repayment of such sums of Moneys as they laid out for their Redemption, and your Petitioners have no means to satisfie the same, but by the moneys raised by that Duty, which having not obtained, they lye at the Merchants mercy, and in danger of hourly imprisonment which is almost as terrible to them as their former Slavery.

Upon consideration of the Premises, your Petitioners most humbly pray, That as his late Majesty of glorious memory, and the Parliament, being deeply sensible of Christians sufferings in this kinde, did graciously make careful Provision for their Redemption; so your Honours would be pleased out of the bowels of mercy, to order their speedy relief, by repayment of the said moneys, or such part thereof as shall be sufficient, not onely to free the persons now in Slavery, but likewise payment of the Debts justly due for the releasement of former Slaves, or continue the said Duty, or give such further remedy as to your wisdoms shall seem most meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.